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Applicant: Nie et al.

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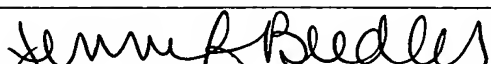
**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Dear Sir:

Prior to the examination of the above-identified patent application, please enter the following amendments and consider the following remarks.

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 2 of this paper.

**Remarks/Arguments** begin on page 7 of this paper.

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